

BUCKLAND'S
COMPLETE
BOOK OF
WITCHCRAFT



Raymond
Buckland

About This Book

The lyrically beautiful rituals of the Old Religion, known as Witchcraft or "Wicca", affect us in many ways. They speak to our present needs, help us to transform the future, and enable us to experience a special link with the Pagan past. Consider this:

"We Wiccans give thanks to the Mighty Ones
For the richness and goodness of life.
As there must be rain with the sun,
To make all things good,
So must we suffer pain with our joy,
To know all things.
Our love is ever with the Gods,
For though we know not their thoughts,
Yet do we know their hearts—
That all is for our good."

The above is taken from Ray Buckland's Summer Solstice rite . . . just one of the very meaningful offerings in his newest volume.

Ray's workbook takes a wholistic approach to the vast body of knowledge that Witches work with, so that information on religion and ritual practices is interwoven with instructions on such diverse topics as healing, herbal lore, dream interpretation, sex magick, the power of colors, runic alphabets, magickal tools, meditation, divination, amulets and talismans, magickal properties of gemstones, candle magick, and so on.

Raymond Buckland is, to my mind, the one person most responsible for getting the Craft so widely spread throughout this country. As long as I've known him, Ray has taken the "long view" towards the Old Religion; it has always been his dream to build a legacy of Wiccan lore for the future.

Buckland has long been an acknowledged master teacher, as well as a superb researcher of rituals and spells. He has been training students for over twenty years, ever since he came to this country to pass on the arcane teachings into which he was initiated before leaving England. His students (myself among them) have always enjoyed and respected his easy, personal, but straightforward and to-the-point style.

True to his usual excellent form, Ray's workbook is arranged by "lessons" rather than by chapters. The lessons here are designed so that the reader can acquire knowledge and experience equal to what Witches in many covens are taught as their Priests and Priestesses bring them up through the traditional three degrees of initiation. Buckland says, "By the time you have finished this training . . . you will be the equivalent of the Third Degree . . ."

I feel that his book of lessons may well become the recognized standard by which those of the Wicca may judge each other and be judged themselves. Many of us have long commented that in various covens and different branches of the Craft the level of background training required for advanced initiations has varied radically . . . from very good (rarely) to satisfactory (sometimes) to atrocious (all too often). Ray's comprehensive training volume should provide the long-awaited basic curriculum that all Witches should be expected to know and be able to practice.

In sharing this material, the author reflects a new era of openness. In the past, Craft secrets of this nature have been highly guarded, and publication of them would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

The lessons in this workbook are positive and ethical. Ray emphasizes that Witchcraft entails "acceptance of personal and social responsibility," and that "it is acknowledgement of a wholistic universe and a means towards a raising of consciousness".

Of course, an ideal workbook should also be a sturdy handbook that provides good, practical information that is easily readable. For anyone looking for a solid education in Witchcraft, Paganism, and magick, this book will prove to be a true treasure. In fact, this book is so jam-packed with information that it may well become the definitive work on this subject! This is just the volume from which to build a basis of solid, valid, most important knowledge, and to use as a foundation from any Craft library. I'd recommend that all who are interested in the Old Religion get this book, study it . . . and treasure it!

—Ed Fitch
Magical Rites from the Crystal Well

About the Author

Raymond Buckland came to the United States from England in 1962. He has been actively involved in the study of the occult for over thirty-five years, and an initiate of the Old Religion for twenty-five. In the past fifteen years he has had more than a dozen books published and has written numerous newspaper and magazine articles.

Considered an authority on witchcraft and the occult, Ray served as technical advisor for the Orson Welles movie *Necromancy* and also worked as an advisor for a stage production of *Macbeth* with William Friedkin (director of *The Exorcist*). He has lectured at universities across the country including Penn State University, University of Western Illinois, University of North Dakota, New York State University and City College San Diego. He has been written about in such newspapers and magazines as *The New York Times*, *New York Daily (and Sunday) News*, *National Observer*, *Look Magazine*, *Cosmopolitan*, *True*, and many others.

Ray has appeared on numerous radio and television talk programs including *The Dick Cavett Show*, *Tom Snyder's Tomorrow Show*, *Not for Women Only* (with Barbara Walters) and the *Virginia Graham Show*. He has been seen on BBC-TV England, RAI-TV Italy, and CBC-TV Canada. He has taught courses at New York State University, Hofstra University and New Hampshire Technical College. He is listed in a number of reference works including *Contemporary Authors*, *Who's Who in America*, *Men of Achievement* and *International Authors and Writers' Who's Who*.

Ray Buckland comes from a family of English Gypsies and is actively involved in researching Romany roots. Today he lives with his wife Tara in Millersburg, Ohio.

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Llewellyn's Practical Magick Series

**BUCKLAND'S
COMPLETE BOOK
OF
WITCHCRAFT**

Raymond Buckland

1997
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For ...

Tara

and in memory of Scire and Olwen

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*Aidan Breac is a Scottish Highlander who was born and raised in a hereditary Craft family on Priest Island, off the west coast of Scotland. He is descended from the Carnonacae tribe of Picts who lived in the northwest of what is now Ross and Cromarty County. Aidan Breac is believed to be in his nineties, (there are no official records of his birth) and for the past thirty years has devoted his time to teaching the Pecti-Wita tradition (a Solitary one) to students hardy enough to make the journey to the rugged northwest of Scotland and share the rigors of his retreat at Castle Carnonacae.

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INTRODUCTION

Witchcraft is not merely legendary; it was, and is, real. It is not extinct; it is alive and prospering. Since the last laws against Witchcraft were repealed (as recently as the 1950s), Witches have been able to come out into the open and show themselves for what they are.

And what are they? They are intelligent, community-conscious, thoughtful men and women of TODAY. Witchcraft is not a step backwards; a retreat into a more superstition-filled time. Far from it. It is a step *forward*. Witchcraft is a religion far more relevant to the times than the vast majority of the established churches. It is the acceptance of personal and social responsibility. It is acknowledgement of a holistic universe and a means towards a raising of consciousness. Equal rights; feminism; ecology; attunement; brotherly/sisterly love; planetary care—these are all part and parcel of Witchcraft, the old yet new religion.

The above is certainly not what the average person thinks of in relation to "Witchcraft". No; the misconceptions are deeply ingrained, from centuries of propaganda. How and why these misconceptions came about will be examined later.

With the spreading news of Witchcraft—what it is; its relevance in the world today—comes "The Seeker". If there *is* this alternative to the conventional religions, this modern, forward-looking approach to life known as "Witchcraft", then how does one become a part of it? There, for many, is the snag. General information on the Old Religion—valid information, from the Witches themselves—is available, but entry into the order is not. The vast majority of covens (groups of Witches) are still wary enough that they do not throw open their doors and welcome all and sundry. They are happy to straighten the misconceptions, but they do not proselytize. This leads many would-be Witches, out of sheer frustration, to simply declare themselves "Witches" and start their own practices. In doing so they draw on any, and oftimes all, available sources. The danger here is that they do not know what is valid and relevant and what is not. Unfortunately there are now many such covens, operating with large chunks of Ceremonial Magick happily mixed-in with smatterings of Satanism and odds and ends of Voodoo together with Amerindian lore. Witchcraft is a very "loose" religion, in terms of ritual practices, but it does have certain basic tenets and there are established ritual patterns to be adhered to.

The purpose of this book is to give this necessary information. With it, you—as an individual or (with like-minded friends) as a group—can then either do your own thing, happy in the knowledge that it is at least as valid as any of the more established traditions, or you can, on locating a coven, become an initiated participant with training and knowledge as good as (if not better than) any of the other coven members.

In Christianity there are many denominations (*e.g.* Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist). So it is in Witchcraft. Just as there is no one religion that is right for all people, there is no one denomination of Witchcraft that is right for all Witches. And that is as it should be. We are all different. Our backgrounds—both ethnic and social—vary greatly. It has often been said that there are many paths, but they all lead to the same center. With so many paths, then, you are able to find the right one for *YOU*; the one path you can travel comfortably and securely.

To be of the most use to you, the information I give in this book—the training you will get—is non-denominational. I take examples from different traditions (*e.g.* Gardnerian, Saxon, Alexandrian, Scottish), giving you both general information and specifics. This is

drawn from my more than twenty years active participation in the Craft, and nearly twice that in the occult generally. By the time you have finished this training (presuming that you take it seriously), you will be the equivalent of the Third Degree, in Gardnerian or similar. From there you can then, as I have said, go on to other perhaps more specific training if you wish, in the sense of being tailored to a particular tradition. But from this present work you can get all of the basics and build from an excellent foundation.

This is a workbook . . . it is something you must work through. Consequently, rather than *Chapters*, I have divided it into *Lessons*. At the end of each lesson you will find workbook exercises. At the end of the book in Appendix B you will find examination questions for each lesson. Read through each lesson. Read and absorb. Read through two or three times if necessary. Go back and pay special attention to anything you find was not easily absorbed. When you are finally happy with what you have learned, answer the examination questions. Answer in your own words, without referring back to the text. In this way you can see what has sunk in and what has not. Do not go on to the next lesson until you are completely happy with the previous one. Answers to the questions are to be found in Appendix C.

The book has been carefully put together in specific order. Don't try to jump ahead to "more exciting" lessons . . . you may well find that you don't have the necessary basics for them! When you have carefully worked through the entire book, *then* will be the time to go back and dip into it as a refresher.

This book is based on the very successful Seax-Wica Seminary course that was enjoyed by over a thousand students worldwide. From that experience I know that the formula works, and works well. I would hasten to add that while *based on* that course, this present work is *not the same course*. The Seax-Wica course was designed specifically for the Saxon tradition; this is not. There is some duplication of the more general Craft material, yes, but not enough that a prior student of the Seminary course could not also enjoy this book.

So, if you are a serious student of Witchcraft, or *Wicca*, either as a would-be practitioner or as one purely academically interested, then I welcome you. I hope you get as much out of this material as did my previous students.

Bright Blessings

Raymond Buckland
San Diego, California

LESSON ONE

THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF WITCHCRAFT

Before really getting into what Witchcraft *is*, perhaps we should take a look back at what it *was*—the history of it. Witches should be aware of their roots; aware of how and why the persecutions came about, for instance, and where and when the re-emergence took place. There is a great deal to be learned from the past. It's true that much of history can seem dry and boring to many of us, but that is far from so with the history of Witchcraft. It is very much alive and filled with excitement.

There have been many books written on the history of Witchcraft. The vast majority have suffered from bias—as will be explained shortly—but a few of the more recently published ones have told the story accurately . . . or as accurately as we can determine. The late Dr. Margaret Murray traced back and saw Witchcraft's origins in Palaeolithic times; 25,000 years ago. She saw it as a more or less unbroken line through to the present, and as a fully organized religion throughout western Europe for centuries before Christianity. Recently scholars have disputed much of what Murray said. She did, however, present some tangible evidence and much thought-provoking material. As a probable development of religio-magick (rather than Witchcraft, *per se*), her theories are still respected.

Twenty-five thousand years ago Palaeolithic Wo/Man depended upon hunting to survive. Only by success in the hunt could there be food to eat, skins for warmth and shelter, bones to fashion into tools and weapons. In those days Wo/Man believed in a multitude of gods. Nature was overwhelming. Out of awe and respect for the gusting wind, the violent lightning, the rushing stream, Wo/Man ascribed to each a spirit; made each a deity . . . a God. This is what we call *Animism*. A god controlled that wind. A god controlled the sky. A god controlled the waters. But most of all, a god controlled the all-important hunt . . . a God of Hunting.

Most of the animals hunted were horned so Wo/Man pictured the God of Hunting also as being horned. It was at this time that magick became mixed in with these first faltering steps of religion. The earliest form of magick was probably of the *sympathetic* variety. Similar things, it was thought, have similar effects: like attracts like. If a life-size, clay model of a bison was made, then attacked and "killed" . . . then a hunt of the real bison should also end in a kill. Religio-magickal ritual



was born when one of the cavemen threw on a skin and antlered mask and played the part of the Hunting God, directing the attack. There are, still in existence, cave paintings of such rituals, together with the spear-stabbed clay models of bison and bear.

It is interesting to see how this form of sympathetic magick survived right through to relatively modern times. The Penobscot Indians, for example, less than a hundred years ago, wore deer masks and horns when performing rituals for the same purpose. The Mandan Indians' Buffalo Dance is another example.

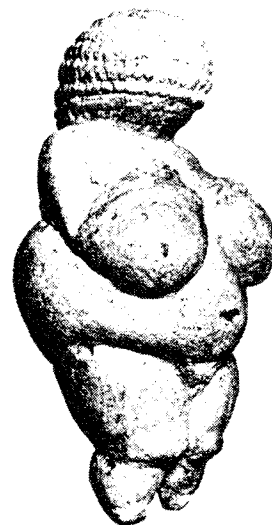
Along with this God of Hunting there was a Goddess, though which came first (or whether they evolved together) we do not know, and it is immaterial. If there were to be animals to hunt, there had to be fertility of those animals. If the tribe was to continue (and there was a high mortality rate in those days) then there had to be fertility of Wo/Man. Again sympathetic magick played a part. Clay models were made of the animals mating, and in an accompanying ritual the members of the tribe would copulate.

There are many carved and modeled representations of the Fertility Goddess extant. Generally known as "Venus" figurines, the Venus of Willendorf is one of the best known. Other examples include the Venus of Laussel and the Venuses of Sireuil and of Lespugne. All are similar in that the feminine attributes of these figures are greatly over-emphasized. They have heavy, pendulous breasts, large buttocks, an oftentimes swollen belly—as though pregnant—and exaggerated genitalia. There is invariably complete lack of identity with the rest of the body. The face is not defined and the arms and legs, if there at all, are barely suggested. The reason is that Wo/Man was solely concerned with the fertility aspect. Woman was the bearer and nurser of the young. The Goddess was her representative as the Great Provider and Comforter; Mother Nature or Mother Earth.

With the development of agriculture there was a further elevating of the Goddess. She now watched over the fertility of the crops as well as of tribe and of animal. The year, then, fell naturally into two halves. In the summer food could be grown, and so the Goddess predominated; in the winter Wo/Man had to revert to hunting, and so the God predominated. The other deities (of wind, thunder, lightning, etc.) gradually fell into the background, as of secondary importance.

As Wo/Man developed, so did the religion—for that is what it had become, slowly and naturally. Wo/Man spread across Europe, taking the gods along. As different countries developed, so the God and Goddess acquired different names (though not always totally different; sometimes simply variations on the same name), yet they were essentially the same deities. This is well illustrated in Britain where, in the south of England, is found *Cernunnos* (literally "The Horned One"). To the north the same god is known as *Cerne*; a shortened form. And in still another area the name has become *Herne*.

By now Wo/Man had learned not only to grow food but also to store it for the winter. So hunting became less important. The Horned God came now to be looked upon more as a God of Nature generally, and a God of Death and what lies after. The Goddess was still of Fertility and



also of Rebirth, for Wo/Man had developed a belief in a life after death. This is evidenced from the burial customs of the period. The Gravettians (22,000–18,000 BCE) were innovators here. They would bury their deceased with full clothing and ornaments and would sprinkle them with red ochre (*haematite*, or iron peroxide), to give back the appearance of life. Frequently family members would be buried beneath the hearth so that they might remain close to the family. A man would be buried with his weapons; perhaps even his dog—all that he might need in the afterlife.

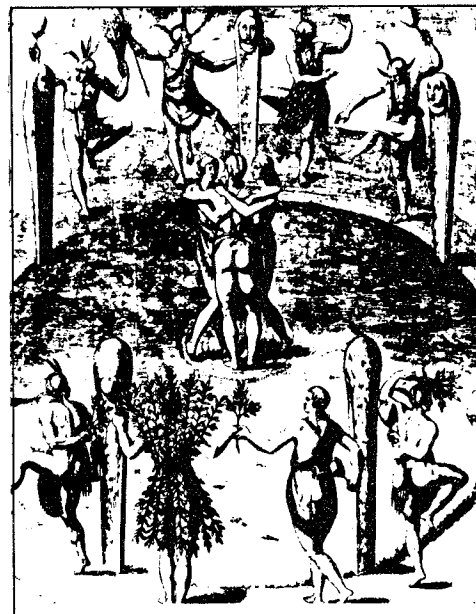
It is not difficult to see how a belief in a life after death came about. At the root of it were dreams. To quote from *Witchcraft From the Inside* (Buckland, Llewellyn Publications, 1975):

“When Man slept he was, to his family and friends, like one of the dead. True, in sleep he occasionally moved and he breathed, but otherwise he was lifeless. Yet when he awoke he could tell of having been out hunting in the forest. He could tell of having met and talked with friends who really were dead. The others, to whom he spoke, could believe him for they too had experienced such dreams. They knew he had not actually set foot outside the cave but at the same time they knew he was not lying. It seemed that the world of sleep was as the material world. There were trees and mountains, animals and people. Even the dead were there, seemingly unchanged many years after death. In this other world, then, Man must need the same things he needed in this world.”

With the development of different rituals—for fertility, for success in the hunt, for seasonal needs—there necessarily developed a priesthood: a select few more able to bring results when directing the rituals. In some areas of Europe (though probably not as generally widespread as Murray indicated) these ritual leaders, or priests and priestesses, became known as the *Wicca**—the “Wise Ones”. In fact by the time of the Anglo-Saxon kings in England, the king would never think of acting on any important matter without consulting the *Witan*; the Council of Wise Ones. And indeed the *Wicca* did have to be wise. They not only led the religious rites but also had to have knowledge of herbal lore, magick and divination; they had to be doctor, lawyer, magician, priest. To the people the *Wicca* were plenipotentiaries between them and the gods. But, at the great festivals, they almost became like gods themselves.

With the coming of Christianity there was *not* the immediate mass-conversion that is often suggested. Christianity was a man-made religion. It had not evolved gradually and naturally over thousands of years, as we have seen that the Old Religion did. Whole countries were classed as Christian when in actuality it was only the rulers who had adopted the new religion, and often only superficially at that. Throughout Europe generally the Old Religion, in its many and varied forms, was still prominent for the first thousand years of Christianity.

An attempt at mass conversion was made by Pope Gregory the Great. He thought that one way to get the people to attend the new Christian churches was to have them built on the sites of the older temples, where the people were accustomed to gathering together to worship. He instructed his bishops to smash any “idols” and to sprinkle the temples with holy water and rededicate them. To a large extent



**Wicca* (m); *Wicce* (f). Also sometimes spelled *Wica* or *Wita*.

Pagani and simply means "people who live in the country". The word "Heathen" means "one who dwells on the heath". So the terms were appropriate for non-Christians at that time, but they bore no connotations of evil and their use today in a derogatory sense is quite incorrect.

As the centuries passed, the smear campaign against non-Christians continued. What the Wiccans did was reversed and used against them. They did magick to promote fertility and increase the crops; the Church claimed that they made women and cattle barren and blighted the crops! No one apparently stopped to think that if the Witches really did what they were accused of, they would suffer equally themselves. After all, they too had to eat to live. An old ritual act for fertility was for the villagers to go to the fields in the light of the full moon and to dance around the field astride pitchforks, poles and broomsticks; riding them like hobby-horses. They would leap high in the air as they danced, to show the crops how high to grow. A harmless enough form of sympathetic magick. But the Church claimed not only that they were working *against* the crops, but that they actually flew through the air on their poles . . . surely the work of the Devil!

In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII produced his Bull against Witches. Two years later two infamous German monks, Heinrich Institoris Kramer and Jakob Sprenger, produced their incredible concoction of anti-Witchery, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Witch Hammer*). In this book definite instructions were given for the prosecution of Witches. However, when the book was submitted to the Theological Faculty of the University of Cologne—the appointed censor at that time—the majority of the professors refused to have anything to do with it. Kramer and Sprenger, nothing daunted, forged the approbation of the whole faculty; a forgery that was not discovered until 1898.

Gradually the hysteria kindled by Kramer and Sprenger began to spread. It spread like a fire—flashing up suddenly in unexpected places; spreading quickly across the whole of Europe. For nearly three hundred years the fires of the persecutions raged. Humankind had gone mad. The inhabitants of entire villages where one or two Witches were suspected of living, were put to death with the cry: "Destroy them all . . . the Lord will know his own!" In 1586 the Archbishop of Treves decided that the local Witches had caused the recent severe winter. By dint of frequent torture a "confession" was obtained and one hundred twenty men and women were burned to death on his charge that they had interfered with the elements.

Since fertility was of great importance—fertility of crops and beasts—there were certain sexual rites enacted by the Wicca, as followers of the nature religion. These sexual rites seem to have been given unnecessary prominence by the Christian judges, who seemed to delight in prying into the most minute of details concerning them. The rites of the Craft were joyous in essence. It was an extremely happy religion and so was, in many ways, totally incomprehensible to the gloomy Inquisitors and Reformers who sought to suppress it.

A rough estimate of the total number of people burned, hung or tortured to death on the charge of Witchcraft, is nine million. Obviously not

The Malleus Maleficarum is in three parts, the first of which treats 'the three necessary concomitants of Witchcraft are the Devil, a Witch, and the permission of Almighty God'. Here the reader is first admonished that to **not** believe in Witchcraft is heresy. Points are then covered on whether children can be generated by Incubi and Succubi; Witches' copulation with the Devil; whether Witches can sway the minds of men to love or hatred; whether Witches can hebetate the powers of generation or obstruct the venereal act; whether Witches may work some prestidigitatory illusion so that the male organ appears to be entirely removed and separate from the body; various ways that the Witches may kill the child conceived in the womb, etc., etc..

The second part, 'Treating of the methods by which works of Witchcraft are wrought and directed, and how they may be successfully annulled and dissolved,' deals with 'the several methods by which devils through Witches entice and allure the innocent to the increase of that horrid craft and company; the way whereby a formal pact with evil is made; how they transport from place to place; how Witches impede and prevent the power of procreation; how as it were they deprive man of his virile member; how Witch midwives commit horrid crimes when they either kill children or offer them to devils in most accursed wise; how Witches—injure cattle, raise and stir up hailstorms and tempests and cause lightning to blast both men and beasts'. Then follow remedies for the above.

The third part of the book 'Relating to the judicial proceedings in both the ecclesiastical and civil courts against Witches and indeed all heretics', is perhaps the most important. It is here that the order of the trial is dealt with. 'Who are the fit and proper judges for the trial of Witches?' is the first question. It goes on to 'The method of initiating a process; the solemn adjuration and re-examination of witnesses; the quality and condition of witnesses; whether mortal enemies may be admitted as witnesses'. Here we are told that 'the testimony of men of low repute and criminals, and of servants against their masters, is admitted . . . it is to be noted that a witness is not to be disqualified because of every sort of enmity'. We learn that, in the case of Witchcraft, virtually anybody may give evidence, though in any other case they would not be admitted. Even the evidence of young children was admissible.

It is obvious from the above that the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* had certain obsessions. A large number of the chapters are, for example, concerned with sexual aspects of Witchcraft . . . who were the authors of this infamous work? They were two Dominicans named Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich (Institor) Kramer.

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